

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-56. Canceled.

57. (Currently Amended) A method of blending food product in a container in which:

the container is charged with food product and cooled to a storage temperature,
the container is fitted with a blending element located in the container,
a closure member is applied to the top of the container to seal the container,
the container, with the food product contained therein, is removed from cooled storage and is located in a blending ~~position, which is~~ location within a microwave enclosure,

the food product is subjected to microwave energy to heat the food product and bring the food product from the storage temperature to a temperature at which it may be blended, ~~in~~ at said blending ~~position~~ location,

the blending element is releasably located in driving engagement with a drive motor external to the enclosure and extending through and adjacent to the closure member, ~~to~~ blend

the food product is blended in the container at said blending location within said microwave enclosure after heating of the food product, and

the blended food product is dispensed from the container.

58. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the microwave energy is directed outwardly from an internal region of the container.

59. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the container and the drive are relatively moved to engage and disengage drive to the blending element.

60. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the drive is releasably connected to the blending element by engagement from an end of the container, through the closure member, and into engagement with the blending element within the container, such drive engagement occurring upon engagement of the container with apparatus by which the container is located and held during heating and blending.

61. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the microwave energy is directed outwardly from antennae means located in a location member extending through food product in the container.

62. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the container is filled with product which is frozen, the container of frozen product is transported to a dispensing location at which the product is heated and blended for the customer to consume out of the container.

63. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, in which the food product includes components so that blending mixes the components to generate carbonation within the product.

64. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the container is held against rotation when the drive motor is operated to effect a blending operation.

65. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the microwave energy is directed from at least two different directions towards the container and its food contents.

66. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein the blending element is formed as an integral part of the container.

67. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 57, wherein, as a unit, the blending element and the container are disengaged and removed from the drive motor.

68. (New) A method of blending food product in a container in which:
the container is charged with food product,
the container is fitted with a blending element located in the container,
a closure member is applied to the top of the container to seal the container,
the container, with the food product contained therein, is removed from storage
and is located in a blending location within a microwave enclosure,

the food product is subjected to microwave energy to heat the food product and bring the food product to a temperature at which it may be blended at said blending location,

the blending element is releasably located in driving engagement with a drive motor external to the enclosure and extending through and adjacent to the closure member,

the food product is blended in the container at said blending location within said microwave enclosure, and

the blended food product is dispensed from the container.

69. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the microwave energy is directed outwardly from an internal region of the container.

70. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the container and the drive are relatively moved to engage and disengage drive to the blending element.

71. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the drive is releasably connected to the blending element by engagement from an end of the container, through the closure member, and into engagement with the blending element within the container, such drive engagement occurring upon engagement of the container with apparatus by which the container is located and held during heating and blending.

72. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the microwave energy is directed outwardly from antennae means located in a location member extending through food product in the container.

73. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the container is filled with product which is frozen, the container of frozen product is transported to a dispensing location at which the product is heated and blended for the customer to consume out of the container.

74. (New) A method according to claim 68, in which the food product includes components so that blending mixes the components to generate carbonation within the product.

75. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the container is held against rotation when the drive motor is operated to effect a blending operation.

76. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the microwave energy is directed from at least two different directions towards the container and its food contents.

77. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein the blending element is formed as an integral part of the container.

78. (New) A method according to claim 68, wherein, as a unit, the blending element and the container are disengaged and removed from the drive motor.

79. (New) A method of blending food product in a container:
charging the container with food product,
placing the container with the food product therein in a microwave enclosure,
subjecting the food product to microwave energy to heat the food product in the microwave enclosure, and
blending the food product in the container within said microwave enclosure.

80. (New) A method according to claim 79, wherein the blending is performed after the subjecting of the food product to the microwave energy.

81. (New) A method according to claim 79, further comprising providing the container with a blending element.

82. (New) A method according to claim 81, further comprising selectively driving the blending element using a drive operatively associated with the microwave enclosure.